

The Grange Warehouse
East side of Riverside Street between
Adams and Washington Streets
Clarksville
Montgomery County
Tennessee

HABS No. TENN-39

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. TENN-39

THE GRANGE WAREHOUSE

Location: East side of Riverside Street between Adams and Washington Streets, Clarksville, Montgomery County, Tennessee
Latitude: 36°31'23" Longitude: 87°21'47"

Present Owner: Rudolph Transfer and Storage Company

Present Occupant: Rudolph Transfer and Storage Company and Clarksville Regional Pool

Present Use: Storage. During the tobacco season, tobacco is frequently stored, but during the remainder of the year space may be rented for other types of storage.

Statement of Significance: From 1876 until the World War I era, this brick structure was considered the largest tobacco warehouse in the world. It may still be among the largest brick warehouses. It covers approximately three acres of ground. During its heyday it was well situated near the waterfront. It had its own wharf on the Cumberland River, from which its goods were sent by boat to New Orleans and from there to foreign and domestic markets. It was also near the railroad when that form of transportation became feasible. Its location on an incline provided external access to each of its three floors.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1858 or 1859.
2. Architect, builder: Architect unknown; built by William M. McReynolds and James M. Swift.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is taken from Picturesque Clarksville, written and published by William P. Titus in 1887.

The Grange Warehouse, which covers near three acres of ground, is at present writing occupied by the firm of Herndon, Hallums & Co., composed of Thomas Herndon, Charles Hallums, J. T. Edwards and Thomas P. Major. This house was originally built for a planing mill by Wm. M. McReynolds and James M. Swift about 1858

or 1859, which enterprise was unsuccessful. McClure & Courts then converted the building to good use for the storage and inspection of tobacco, naming it the Cumberland Warehouse, and operating it up to the breaking out of the war. In the Fall of 1865 it was reopened as a tobacco commission house by W. S. McClure, and was succeeded in the Fall of 1867 by Captain A. F. Smith and W. H. Turnley. Turnley sold out to D. B. Hutchings, and the house was operated under the firm name of Smith & Hutchings. This firm was succeeded by M. L. Killebrew and J. Logan Williamson, Killebrew & Williamson being the style of the firm. Killebrew soon retired, and the firm of Grinter, Young & Co. was formed in 1873, Mr. Williamson remaining in the firm, and the following year James H. Smith took Mr. Williamson's place in the house. During the year 1875 the house was operated by Smith & Kennedy, James H. Smith and James T. Kennedy, with A. B. Harrison as a silent partner, and in 1876 it was purchased by a chartered organization or company, made up of five hundred or more farmers, under the name of the Grange Warehouse Association, with Captain Thomas Herndon as Superintendent to manage the business of the house, who was elected annually during the continuance of the organization. The funds to purchase, increase the capacity of the house and conduct the business was raised by the issuance of stock in shares of \$5.00. The grangers operated the house nine years, and it was exceedingly prosperous under Captain Herndon's management. The house sold from ten to twelve thousand hogsheads of tobacco good crop years, and after setting apart a large reserve fund, paid its stockholders ten per cent dividend and a rebate of \$1.50 on each hogshead of tobacco shipped to the house. The grangers organized in 1875, doing business one year in New Providence, with Captain Herndon as Superintendent. In 1884 the Association determined to retire from the trade, and it consequently went into liquidation, selling its property for division. The warehouse was sold at public auction, Captian Frank P. Gracey becoming the purchaser at \$19,000. The firm of Herndon, Young & Co. was organized and operated the house two years, when Mr. Charles Hallums bought the interest of Mr. C. T. Young, taking his place in the firm. The main building has capacity for storing three thousand hogsheads of tobacco, and the company have shed room for storing three thousand more. This house has at all times been the recipient of large favors, leading always in receipts, which have ranged from eight to twelve thousand hogsheads in good crop years, and five to seven thousand hogsheads in short years. The building fronts on

Cumberland River near the freight depot, a most advantageous location.

While the Grange has been operated by various firms through the years, its ownership has continued with the heirs of Captain Frank P. Gracey. The name of the Gracey firm was F. P. Gracey Brothers until June 21, 1936, when it was changed to Rudolph Transfer and Storage Co. (Gharter Book 3, p. 266).

There are two distinct parts to the Grange Warehouse. That portion fronting Adams Street is referred to as the Upper Grange and that portion fronting Washington Street is referred to as the Lower Grange. They were frequently leased to different firms. The Clarksville City Directories show a number of tobacco houses utilizing them over the years.

The following excerpt from The Clarksville Edition of The National Trade Review for 1895 refers to the Grange:

Captain Gracey built and owns two of the largest tobacco warehouses in the city. The "Gracey" (now called the Queen City House) and the Grange. The "Grange" is the largest tobacco warehouse in the world. It occupies an entire block on the river front and is 280 x 500 feet in dimensions, three stories in height. It is so arranged being on a hillside that each floor is on a level with the street. The building is constructed very substantially, the very best of material being used and the best of mechanics employed in its construction. It is well braced and the posts and braces used in it reminded one of a forest in looking from one end of the building to the other. It will conveniently store 10,000 hogsheads of tobacco.

4. Alterations and additions: Built originally as a planing mill by William M. McReynolds and James M. Swift in 1858 or 1859. Some changes were probably made in the structure when it was converted to a tobacco warehouse. No information has been found to indicate the nature of the changes, however. When purchased by the Grange Warehouse Association in 1876, mention was made of increasing its capacity. A drawing in Titus, page 332, shows a one-story building which apparently extends an entire block. It has a three-story section near the middle of the block with an entrance at the second level. The building was acquired by Captain Frank P. Gracey in 1884; in 1895 mention was made in The National Trade Review of his building, the Grange. Evidently between 1887 and 1895, the structure was greatly enlarged so that the Upper

Grange contained three levels and the Lower Grange two. A photograph of it at this period appears in the 1895 Clarksville edition of The National Trade Review. The Adams Street front at this time shows a stepped parapet roofline. The building is minus the parapets in its present condition. The increase in floor space is further evidenced by the description of its capacity in 1887 as 3,000 hogsheads, and in 1895, as 10,000 hogsheads.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The cultivation of tobacco in Montgomery County antedates the county's name. Three years after its incorporation by act of the North Carolina General Assembly in 1785, Clarksville was declared a tobacco inspection site, the first such designation in North Carolina. The early settlers of Montgomery County were from North Carolina and Virginia and were familiar with methods of culture and curing of tobacco. The tobacco produced in the Clarksville area was a dark, heavy leaf similar to that produced in the James River area of Virginia. It was much sought after in the European market.

Clarksville served as a market for tobacco grown in the Clarksville district, which included Stewart and Robertson counties in Tennessee and several contiguous counties in Kentucky totalling eighteen or twenty counties. From the Clarksville warehouses, the hogsheads of tobacco were loaded on boats for New Orleans, from whence they were shipped to their European markets. In 1886 the Goodspeed History of Tennessee indicated that about 3,500 hogsheads--or about five million pounds--was the average annual yield for Montgomery County. However, more than this would pass through the several warehouses in Clarksville. By 1820, 7,000 hogsheads annually were shipped to New Orleans.

In 1895 Clarksville was the third largest tobacco market in the United States and the largest export market. Shipments ranged from 30,000 to 40,000 hogsheads a year. The greatest markets for Clarksville tobacco were Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Spain, and Africa.

Although the tobacco market has declined and Clarksville no longer ships the large quantities it once shipped to foreign ports, it is still an important local market. Railroads have replaced the river boat, however, and Clarksville no longer figures as a river port.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: A drawing in Titus, p. 332, shows a one-story building which apparently extends an entire block. It has

a three-story section near the middle of the block with an entrance at the second level.

A photograph of the structure after its enlargement between 1887 and 1895 appears in the May 1895 Clarksville edition of The National Trade Review. The Adams Street front shows a stepped parapet roofline. The present structure is without parapets.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Conversation with Mr. Donald Gracey (1899-), grandson of Captain Frank B. Gracey, July 28, 1971.

Office of the Register, Montgomery County, Clarksville, Tennessee.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Beach, Ursula S. Along the Warrioto. Nashville: McQuiddy Press, 1964, p. 274.

History of Tennessee. Nashville: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1886, p. 250.

The National Trade Review, Clarksville Edition, May, 1895. Evansville, Indiana: Keller Printing Co., 1895, pp. 39-41, 60.

Titus, William P. Picturesque Clarksville. Clarksville, Tennessee: William P. Titus, 1887.

Prepared by John W. Kiser
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
Summer 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: From 1876 until the World War I era, this brick structure was considered the largest tobacco warehouse in the world. It may still be among the largest brick warehouses, covering approximately three acres. Its location on an incline provides external access to each of its three levels.

2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This rectangular building measures 279' x 246'. In general it consists of two floors, but there are three floors in some parts of the building, due to its location on a slope.

2. Foundations: Brick.

3. Wall construction, finish and color: Natural and painted brick, English bond.

4. Structural system, framing: Load bearing masonry walls with wood truss (rotary cut).

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Batten doors.

b. Windows and shutters: In general, the windows are six-over-six double-hung sash. The clerestory contains alternating six-light windows and wooden louvers.

6. Roof: Gable, metal covering.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Open plan.

2. Flooring: Wood flooring.

3. Ceiling finish: Exposed joist.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: Fronts on Riverside Drive three hundred feet from east bank of Cumberland River.

Prepared by Roy C. Pledger
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
August 1971

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the summer of 1971 as part of a co-operative project of the National Park Service, the Tennessee Historical Commission, and the Historic Sites Federation of Tennessee. The work represents the second phase of an extensive recording program to document the historic architecture of Middle Tennessee; it involved the recording of structures in the counties surrounding Nashville.

The project was under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey. Supervisor of the recording team was Prof. Roy C. Pledger of Texas A & M University. The team was composed of John W. Kiser, Architectural Historian (University of Tennessee); Daryl P. Fortier, Architect (University of Minnesota); and student architects Gilbert M. Glaubinger (Rhode Island School of Design), Steven P. Roberts (Ohio State University), and Barry S. Williams (Texas A & M University). Photographs were made by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer.